

REMARKS

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a), specifically regarding the features in claim 16. Claim 16 has now been amended to claim the feature that is shown in the drawings. The Amendment to claim 16 also addresses the related rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claims 12 - 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner noted that the hollow interior does not have antecedent basis. Claim 12 has now been amended to require that the hollow cavity has reinforcement dowels. The Amendment to claim 12 should overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 1 - 3 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lutz (DE 3815990). Claim 1 has been amended to require that the channel has a projection extending into the channel in a predetermined location for defining a stop means for limiting the travel of the end of the tubular member. Lutz does not show or disclose this feature. Claim 1 is now believed to be allowable over the prior art. The rejection of claim 17 is traversed. Claim 17 requires that an exposed surface of the upper element has a raised lip traversing the width of a center portion of the upper element for receiving portions of two feature is shown in Figure 6 at reference number 74. This feature is shown in Figure 6 at reference number 74. Neither Lutz nor the other cited prior art show or disclose this feature. Therefore, claim 17 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 4, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lutz in view of Liu (U.S. 5,695,205). Claims 10, 15, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lutz in view of Liu and further in view of Roby et al. (U.S. 4,077,644).

In light of the now allowability of claim 1, dependent claims 2 - 4, 8 - 10, and 12 - 18 are also believed to be allowable.

Claim 19 was objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim. The Examiner stated in the last Office Action that the features of claim 19

Date February 20, 2004

Reply to Office Action dated November 25, 2003

were not taught by the prior art. Claim 19 has now been amended to place in independent form to include all of the features of original claim 1 and original claim 19 and other features of the dependent claims to provide proper antecedent basis. Claim 19 is now believed to be allowable.

New claims 20 - 24 have been added. New claims 20 - 24 include features originally disclosed in the specification. No new matter has been added. Consideration of new claims 20 - 24 is respectfully requested.

This Amendment should place this case in condition for passing to issue. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & BASILE, P.C.



Darlene P. Condra
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 37113
(248) 649-3333

3001 West Big Beaver Rd., Suite 624
Troy, Michigan 48084-3107

Dated: February 20, 2004
DPC/dge